


FROM	NAME & TITLE	AVA RICHARDSON, DIRECTOR	CITY of BALTIMORE MEMO	
	AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS	OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY 8 TH FLOOR, 417 EAST FAYETTE STREET		
	SUBJECT	CITY COUNCIL BILL #24-0507/ Study and Report – Infrastructure and Urban Meadows		

TO

The Honorable President and
Members of the City Council
City Hall, Room 400
100 North Holliday Street

DATE: September 24, 2024

Position: Support with Amendments

At a special meeting on September 23, 2024, the Commission on Sustainability considered City Council Bill #24-0507 – Study and Report – Infrastructure and Urban Meadows, for the purposed of requiring the Baltimore City Administrator, the Baltimore Office of Sustainability, and the Baltimore Commission on Sustainability to submit a report to the Mayor and City Council assessing the costs and benefits of installing and maintaining 100 acres of low-maintenance and self-sustaining native plant communities (otherwise known as “urban meadows”) and mapping vacant lots and existing areas with packed dirt that could be transformed into urban meadows; and providing for a special effective date.

In its consideration of this bill, the Commission on Sustainability met on May 30th and prepared a list of questions to submit to the bill sponsor, Councilman Mark Conway. The Commission on Sustainability held a special meeting on September 23rd, during which the Commission reviewed the bill report submitted to the City Council by the Office of Sustainability in support of City Council Bill #24-0507. Councilman Conway attended the meeting and addressed questions from the Commission.

The Commission on Sustainability is generally supportive of the intent of this bill. In its consideration of the bill, the Commission suggested that the intent of the bill may be expressed more clearly by shifting the focus from “urban meadows” specifically to a scope that would evaluate the costs and benefits of a variety of sustainable land management practices that the City could pilot in locations currently maintained as mown grass.

Although generally supportive of the bill, the Commission on Sustainability expressed concerns about the scope of the study and the resources that will be made available to the Office of Sustainability to complete the study. The Commission recognizes that the City Council does not have the authority to dedicate funds outside of its role in adopting the annual Ordinance of Estimates.

The Commission on Sustainability adopted the following, with nine members being present (nine in favor):

RESOLVED, that the Commission on Sustainability recommends that City Council Bill #24-0507 be **approved with amendments** by the City Council.

A report containing the recommended amendments and questions from the Commission on Sustainability is attached.

If there are any questions about this bill report, please contact Mia Blom and Jared Lyles, Co-chairs of the Commission on Sustainability, at miajblom@gmail.com and jarednyles@gmail.com respectively, and copy sustainability@baltimorecity.gov.

AR/agb

attachment

cc: Ms. Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office
Mr. Ty'lor Schnella, Mayor's Office
The Honorable Mark Conway, Councilmember, District 4
The Honorable Phylicia Porter, Council Representative to the Commission on Sustainability
Mr. Chris Ryer, Director of Planning Director
Ms. Amy Gilder-Busatti, Sustainability Manager
Ms. Valerie Rupp, Climate & Resilience Manager
Ms. Natawna Austin, Council Services
Ms. Stephanie Murdock, DHCD
Ms. Elena DiPietro, Law Department